

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 176. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1872.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE WICKED WOODS OF TOBEREEVIL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NESTER'S HISTORY."

CHAPTER XXXI. THE FALSE LOVE.

SIMON was getting through the cold weather badly. He missed Tibbie, and he missed the fool. He had now to light his scrap of fire with his own trembling fingers, and to cook his morsels of food himself. He had no one to scold, no one on whom to vent in passion the anxiety of his mind, which feared that he must yet be robbed, and live to die a pauper. His soul, too, was racked by tortures of doubt as to his nephew's fitness for the trust which had been reposed in him. In the business of wringing money from the tenants he did not show that eagerness and ingenuity which Simon had hoped to find in him. He had proposed to grant a small piece of mountain land to a certain old beggar woman, so that she might build herself a house, and live in it free of rent. There was an audacity in this proposal which had terrified the miser. How was he safe in the hands of a person who could conceive and give utterance to such an idea? He could only keep watch over the doings of this nephew and agent, exerting himself meanwhile to make amends, by personal economy, for any extravagance which the young man might perpetrate. He had now reduced the cost of his living very low, powder and shot being the chief items of his expenditure; and larks and thrushes, crows and sparrows, were the dainties which supplied the absence of more ordinary food. Since Tibbie's disappearance he had not enjoyed the luxury of bread. The birds of the air and the roots of the

earth were more than enough to satisfy his appetite. He ate but once a day, and the fire was allowed to go out as soon as his dinner had been cooked. This was a new plan of saving, for formerly he had been used to have a fire, however small, at which to warm his frail body in the winter weather. So now he suffered sorely from the cold, though that was little to Simon while he felt that he did his duty. He missed the fool even more than Tibbie, for Con would not now be coaxed within his doors; but would nevertheless come hovering about the place, peering in at the key-holes, and flattening his white face against the window-panes. Simon was often unconsciously an object of close observation to the fool, who, with the strong fascination of hatred, would watch him unseen through some secret loophole; but if Simon chanced to espy him, this irregular visitor would at once vanish off into the woods.

Whilst Tibbie and Katherine were making their way into the house, Simon was sitting in state in his freezing den, expecting the arrival of the new agent upon business. His pistols were beside him on the table; for he never forgot that he was subject to a danger from the presence of his nephew. The fear of the fulfilment of the prophecy by Paul haunted him unceasingly, and made him wary in his dealings with this young man, whom he had admitted into his confidence. He never turned his back upon him for a moment, and never, during their interviews, moved from the table where the pistols lay near his hand. To-day he was sitting thus, provided against danger, when Paul made his appearance—a good deal changed from the Paul of a few months ago, looking pale and thin, with restless eyes and a nervous and uneasy expression about the mouth.

He looked as if the sun had not shone on him for a year. His dress, too, was more careless than it used to be, and he appeared altogether as if things were far from well with him. The change did not escape Simon's eye, and he was pleased with it. "The young man is taking a lesson from me," thought the miser; "he is growing more saving of his pocket, and more sparing of his enjoyments. I see that I have but to be patient with him, and he will yet turn out well."

Paul drew his chair to the opposite side of the table, and uncle and nephew set to work to do their business together. They made a striking contrast, though there was some likeness between them. Paul had his mother's fair skin and fair hair, and was so far unlike the race of the misers, who were of a swarthy complexion. He had a broader forehead than had been the share of any of his fathers, but he had the arched nose of the Finistons, and the dark flashing eye, deep-set under graceful brows. There was enough likeness between the old and the young man to make a looker-on tremble for what Paul might yet become.

Paul delivered over the money which he had collected for rent, but the sum fell short of the miser's expectations.

"So!" cried he in a passion, "I see that already you have allowed yourself to be imposed upon. They tell you they cannot pay. I ask them to look at me. Is there a man on the property who lives with rational temperance except myself? Let them find you the money, or you and I must quarrel. If you will not deal fairly with them, somebody else shall do it. Every man who will not pay must quit the place."

"You had better let them stay where they are," said Paul. "Good times may come, and they may be enabled to meet your demand. Turn them out of the country, and where are the wealthier tenants to fill their place? You will find empty cabins, and no money at all."

"That is your ignorance," said the miser; "but I am willing to teach you. There are shepherds, Scotchmen, who would take the whole mountain from me at a handsome rent. Now am I—a man practising self-denial in my own person—to make enormous sacrifice for the sake of pampered beggars who, I doubt not, will have their two meals in the day? My plan is to get rid gradually of the poorest amongst my tenants. People have no right to live in a country which is not able to

support them. For the future I shall expect you to understand me in this matter. If the people will not pay you, you must send the people away."

"I have no liking for the work, sir. I don't see how I can obey you."

"Then, sir, I don't see how you can expect to be my heir. I am not bound to leave my little property to you. I have connexions in England, wise, rich men, who look well to the increase of their store, and deserve a helping hand on that account. To them shall go every penny I am possessed of, if you set up your ideas in opposition to mine."

Paul flushed and turned pale. The time was gone past when such a threat as this had no terrors for him. It was dreadful to him now, for the thirst for power had taken possession of his soul. It enraged him to think of those wise, rich men from England coming over here to plant, and to sow, and to build upon his land. He was convinced that he could rule the country better than they could do, and it might be well to save the many by the sacrifice of a few. Evil must be done in order that good might come of it. Paul swiftly argued thus in his own mind—that clouded mind which was no longer what it had been.

He was conscious of a falling off in his own mental powers, in his capacity for thought and feeling. The consciousness tortured him, but he could not see where he had gone wrong, nor discern any means by which he could become better or wiser in the future. He could not even think the matter out, for his mind would not fasten on it, and all his moral perceptions were becoming hazy and dull. His memory was whimsical; certain ideas passed away from it, like the mist of breath from off a glass, whilst others enlarged themselves, became distorted, and were not to be effaced. He forgot at this moment his former desire to be independent of the miser, his aspirations after honest industry, however meagre the reward. He thought no more of the plans which May had helped him to map out. He remembered only that he wanted Tobereevil, and also that if he quarrelled with the miser, certain rich men from England would step into the inheritance which he coveted. Upon this one point his mind fastened its strength, and the fierce desire for possession took firm hold of his brain. He promised Simon that he would see about the matter.

"See about it in time, then," said the miser, "for you have natural disqualifications for your office, and you will need to work hard in order to overcome them. But I will give you time, for we are a slow race in developing. As young men we are spendthrifts, and seem in danger of being ruined, but time improves us, and we grow wise as we grow old. So you may go away now, and think over this matter of the Scotch shepherds. Have a calculation made by the next time you come here, and let me know how soon we shall be ready for them."

Paul went away with slow steps and aching heart, knowing that he had bound himself to do work which his soul abhorred, and yet feeling himself utterly unable to struggle with the unholy force which had thus dragged him into bondage. Having thus, as he believed, sold himself to evil, he shrank from the eye of the heavens, and from the sad face of the land which lay so sadly waiting for its deliverance. He was seized with a passionate desire to gloat over the old walls, which contained somewhere that treasure which was to make him master of everything that a man could covet in the world. As he went up the grand staircase the thought of May crossed his mind, a vision of her imploring face arose before his eyes, and for a moment the madness of supreme anguish made him dizzy. What would she say when she found that he had fallen so low? But the three passed, and again he thought with delight of the miser's gold, then reflected with sudden wonder upon the condition of his own feelings, since this new joy of avarice had more power to keep its hold of him than had sorrow for the pain of his love. Was it possible that May had become less dear to him than she used to be? He groaned at this thought, and almost declared to himself in his passion that it must be so. If this were indeed the case, then must he rush on headlong to an evil end. Was this, indeed, a fate that was pursuing him? Must the love of May be thrust out of his heart by the power of that curse which was already beginning to work upon him? He leaned against the wall, and hid his face between his hands. He was not false, nor had he tired of her tenderness. She was still rare, and holy, and beautiful in his eyes; but he only seemed to understand this, not to feel it with his heart, into which had come the greed for gold. He seemed to see her at a distance, whither

she had retired slowly and cruelly, and against his will. Longing would not bring her to him, despair could not break down the barrier which had erected itself between them. As he stood there, wrestling with an agony such as he had never suffered before, her saddened eyes seemed to shine out of a cloud which was beyond and above him. His woe became intolerable, and he tried to dash it from him, hurrying upward through the chambers of the mouldering mansion, and striving to revive within him all his old loathing of the race which had dwelt in it, and of their treasure which had made them what they were. These fierce efforts wasted him, and he looked thin and worn as he wandered, more tranquilly now, from room to room. A happier thought of his love came uppermost in his mind, and an unutterable longing for her presence took possession of him. If she were only here to receive the confession of his weakness! With this better thought in his mind, he looked up and saw Katherine.

The place of this meeting was on that high remote passage lined with goblin presses, where, not quite a year ago, the miser had essayed to make a bargain with the pedlar. Paul had not seen it since that evening when he had suddenly sickened with fear, and had fled from the spot, hoping to return never more. Now his wanderings had unexpectedly brought him here again. Katherine had been looking out of the little window from which he himself had gazed whilst the miser sorted his wares; the place was dim and ghostly, and she made a striking picture with her white-clad shoulders and gleaming head lit up by the only ray that found its way into the twilight.

She turned to him smiling with genuine delight.

"So you have come at last," she said; "but how did you know I was here?"

"I did not know that you were here," said Paul.

"Ah, well! you see, I drew you to the place. I knew that you were coming to Tobereevil to-day, and I thought I should ask you to take me home through these dreadful woods."

"Certainly," said Paul; but he said it unwillingly, for he had some expectation that May would come to meet him; and at this moment he felt feverishly anxious to meet her. If he could but see her just now, the barrier of reserve might be broken down between them. Now he

could confess, could ask for help; later his mood might change, so that the words he wished to speak would be no longer on his tongue.

"We had better go at once," said Paul. "May is coming to meet me."

Katherine laughed.

"You need not be uneasy about her, for she is making cakes, and she could not leave them. She would not risk the proper shade of brown upon the crust—not for the sweetest conversation that heart ever held with heart."

"You wrong her," said Paul. "She can do much for those she loves."

"Who are they?" said Katherine. "May love any one! The fancy makes me smile."

"You forget that she loves me."

Katherine shrugged her shoulders.

"Does that idea really still bewitch your imagination? You think May loves you? It is so odd."

"I remember that you are a lady," said Paul; "but you try my patience too much."

"Do I?" said Katherine. "I admit that I am rather outspoken. I am not like her—calm, cold, and proper. My patience is tired. I cannot quietly look on and see one like you bound heart and soul, for life, to such an iceberg."

She was still leaning against the little window, with her head and shoulders framed by it. A stray gleam of sun had pierced the opening; illumined her golden head and scintillating eyes; put a carmine touch on her speaking lips, and a rosy curve of light round the rim of her peachy face. The white-furred shoulders stirred slightly, and the jewel at her throat quivered as if with feeling. Never was an unlovely soul more enchantingly disguised. Paul stood opposite, wrapped in the twilight, leaning against one of the goblin presses. His face was stern, but he started as a flashing look of homage was flung upon him, flattering him from head to foot. Katherine went on without waiting for him to recover from his surprise.

"Ah, you think she is not an iceberg. Men are so easily deceived. A few sweet words will keep you happy for a year. That is while you are suitors; but how will it be through life? A selfish mate, a cold heart—freezing all the warm efforts of your own. One who can make cruel plans to fool you while you are her lover—what will she be for sympathy after years have gone past?"

"What do you mean?" asked Paul, and

his heart shook with terror of an evil far greater than anything he had imagined.

"Oh, I have said too much. Surely I have forgotten myself. Whispered words between friends ought to be kept sacred, ought they not? I am sure you know that girls are apt to make confidences to each other. But I forgot that you have known so little about women." Katherine sighed. "I have already said too much. I will not be guilty of making mischief between you."

"You are rather late with that resolution," said Paul. "I am at a loss to know why you have spoken so at all."

Katherine turned away a little towards the embrasure of the window, and her head drooped on her hands.

"I have done wrong," she said, "and I cannot say any more. A woman must not betray herself. I did not mean to speak, only when one has a passionate interest at heart, prudence sometimes gets swept away upon the wave of too much feeling."

It came slowly into Paul's mind that her meaning was to drive May out of his heart, and thrust herself therein. He burned with surprise and shame, that a woman, and such a woman, should love him unsought. He pitied her, was grateful to her, admired and despised her, all in one moment. Then indignation took possession of him as he thought of May; and a superstitious dread of Katherine mingled itself with his anger. The spirit of maddening despondency which pursued him, whispered to him now that this woman was a part of his evil destiny, that she would separate him from May, and thus help his ruin. When Katherine looked up to see the effect of her words, she saw a face not full of tenderness, but of hatred and anger. Her blue eyes met his, and opened themselves scared. The sun shone more brightly through the little square of window, and made Katherine more beautiful every moment, intensifying its lustre in her frightened eyes, and shedding a more golden bloom on her cheek, which had turned pale with real woe. For the second time in his life Paul found himself struggling with the frantic desire to harm a fellow-creature; and on the very same spot whence he had fled from the temptation so many months ago. But the fear in the woman's eyes touched all that was manly in his nature, and this passion left him suddenly, and he was shocked at himself.

"It is getting late," he said. "That bright gleam comes just before sunset."

You must allow me to see you home at once."

Katherine bent her head with an expression of meek obedience, which was not all assumed. This wild Paul had got a power over her which no one had ever before possessed; a power wielded unconsciously, and which she had never yet fully recognised until now. They went silently together downward through the mazes of the old mansion, he going first, opening doors, and turning to assist her over broken places in the staircase; she following silently and humbly in her pallid beauty, as if terrified and stricken at what had befallen her. She was stunned, having suddenly come face to face with her own defeat. She had thought to be mistress, and found that she was slave. A pain new to her, so sound in body, so unfeeling in spirit, had cloven her heart at sight of Paul's look of hatred. She was confounded with a new and strange knowledge of herself, so that her agony was genuine, even if rage made a part of it. Every time Paul turned to her, of necessity he pitied her, and his heart reproached him a little more, and a little more. By the time they had got out into the open air his voice had got gentle when he addressed her. By-and-bye, she pleaded to be allowed to cling to his arm, for the fear that she had of these unnatural woods. And this being conceded, the two passed on their way, and were lost in the thickness of the trees.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

SCOTCH WITCHES AND WARLOCKS.

SUPERSTITION, dark shadow born of ignorance and fear, ruled the Scotland of the Middle Ages with a power which almost rivalled that of religion. The ghosts and spectres of the pagan times, dim reflections cast by the rude deities of the Picts, the Norsemen, and the early Irish invaders, long lingered in lonely glens and rocky valleys, by the sides of desolate lakes, and by the ruins of old fortresses, refusing to be exorcised from their old strongholds by calm saints with bell, book, or candle, wrestling for their new religion which had peacefully superseded the grosser worship. In the course of centuries Scotch Christianity gradually became adulterated by an admixture of the old belief, and the Douglas and his followers, who knelt before the shrine of St. Andrew in the morning, at evening shuddered as they rode along the sands, past the Kelpie's Flow, or

imagined they saw down a glade of the moonlit woods the Queen of Fairy holding high revel in some clearing among the bracken. Though more numerous in the Highlands, these descendants of the old deities of Scotland were equally feared and dreaded in the more peaceful and more civilised Lowlands. Even in the Catholic times, religion in Scotland, hard and logical as the people were, always assumed a character more stern and gloomy than that of England. The omnipresence, the almost omnipotence of the Prince of Evil, was a vital and prominent article of the creed of the Scotch preacher, before even Calvinism acquired its full sway over the national heart.

Of all the beliefs engendered by semi-Christianised paganism, that which took the deepest and most fatal hold was the dread of witchcraft. No Scot, wise or simple, but fully believed, as much as he believed the main articles of the Christian faith, that hundreds of cankered old women, soured by poverty and sorrow, sold themselves formally to the devil, who appeared in propria persona to see the bond signed with their blood, a ceremony accompanied by many ludicrous yet ghastly observances. The blood of men, far-seeing as Bruce and lion-hearted as Wallace, has often run cold to hear how once a year, at the witches' annual Sabbath, the hags who served Satan assembled to hear him preach and deride the religion of Christ with ribald sermon and demoniacal prayers. Nor did men of later days, and more versatile brains, like Sir David Lindsay or Buchanan, ever question that Galloway witches could mutter words that at once transformed the broomsticks they bestrode on the windy heath to flying horses, that bore them swift away over firth and tarn, mountain-peak and glen, steeples and roofs glittering silver in the moonshine, to the King of France's cellars, where, in a circle round the biggest butt of Burgundy, the haggard "cummers" would clatter and chuckle as they quaffed the stolen wine, till the time came to mount again the bonny steeds that had brought them so deftly over the sea.

No sudden sickness fell on a Scotchman in the time of Barfour, or of Knox, but he at once turned pale at the sudden and sure conviction that he was elf-shot, that some witch he had chidden for stealing wood, or to whom he had refused a pinch of oatmeal, or a mutchkin of whisky, had cast a spell over him, had repeated the Lord's Prayer backwards outside his door

or had melted a little wax effigy of him over some enchanted fire. These fears, and such as these, racked and tormented the minds of many generations of worthy Scotchmen, and led to the cruel persecution and horrible deaths of many thousands of rheumatic, half-crazed, hysterical, harmless old women.

A picturesque yet careful summary of a few of these witch-trials will show very perfectly the exact nature of this absurd belief, and the varied character that it assumed as the darkness of superstition lightened or deepened over the bleak northern land where it had taken such firm root.

The Scottish witches seem to have began their infernal cantrips as early as the times of St. Patrick, when a gang of them, as that worthy and vermin-hating saint was crossing to Scotland, hurled a rock at him, which rock is now known as that on which Dumbarton Castle securely stands. In 968, King Duff only saved himself from a mortal sickness, by discovering in time, and breaking, a wax image of himself melting away at a witches' fire at Forres, in Murray. For this treasonable act several witches were immolated. After this acute monarch came Thomas the Rhymer, Thomas of Ercildoune, as he was usually called, whom the Queen of the Fairies decoyed from the Tweed-side meadows into Fairyland. Nor must we forget the great wizard of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, Michael Scott, who shook France and Spain with his spells, and even split the Eildon hills into three. And later came the wicked enchanter, William Lord Soulis, who, when no sword or spear could pierce him, was dropped into a hot cauldron like a ham, and, under considerable protest on his part, boiled to death.

But, leaving the swamp of fiction and coming to the terra firma of fact, let us calmly state that in 1479 no less a person than the Earl of Mar, twelve "mean women," and several wizards, were burnt at Edinburgh for melting a waxen image of the king; and the year after it was currently reported that "the young lady of Mar" had formed a highly improper acquaintance with an Incubus, while in 1537 Lady Glamis, the young and beautiful widow of that pugnacious chieftain, Lord Glamis, or as he was more generally and admiringly called, "Clear the Causeway," and the grand-daughter of that grand old murderer, Archibald Bell-the-Cat, was burnt for witchcraft, on a false charge of

poisoning her husband, and attempting to poison the king.

The first recorded witch-trial took place in 1576. On the 8th of November, 1576, Bessie Dunlop, the wife of a yeoman, named Andro Jake of Lyne, in Ayrshire, walking to Monkcastle-yard, weeping for a dead cow and also for her husband and children, who were down with a fever, met the ghost of one Thom Reid, who had been killed at the battle of Pinkie, twenty-nine years before, and was at the time she met him lodging in Fairyland.

"Sancta Maria," said he, "Bessie, why make you such dool and greeting for any worldly thing?"

Thom, we may mention, was a grey-bearded ghost, wearing a grey coat with old-fashioned Lombard sleeves, grey breeks, and white stockings gartered at the knee. He had a black bonnet with silken lace, and carried a white wand in his hand. Eventually the well-clad ghost, consoling the poor crying woman by telling her that though her child would die her husband would recover, disappeared through an impossibly small hole in the nearest dyke. After this came other interviews with the designing ghost. The third time the cloven foot showed pretty clearly, for he endeavoured to persuade her to deny her baptism, but orthodox Bessie declared she would rather be "ridden at horses' tails" than forswear her Christianity. At the fourth meeting Thom came to the woman's own house, carried her audaciously off from a small but select tea-party of her husband and "three creeshie tailors," and took her to a witches' assembly. There were eight women in plaids there and four well-dressed men, who tried to persuade her to go back with them to Fairyland, where she should have plenty of beef and good braw clothes, but frightened Bessie stoutly refused to go, and Thom threatened her for refusing.

After this the Queen of the Fairies, "a stout, comely woman," came to her as she was lying in bed during her confinement, and asked for a drink, which Bessie gave her. The queen told her, as Thom had done, that her child would die, and her husband recover. At a later period, Thom gave Bessie roots to make into powder and salve for human beings, as well as for cattle. Armed with these specifics, Bessie soon became famous as a doctress. She cured Lady Johnstone's daughter, with spiced ale, of swoons, and her wife's sister's cow, but failed with old Lady Kilbowye's crooked leg, because the marrow of it was

gone, and the blood, according to her great medical authority, Thom, was "dosint," or as we should say benumbed. Bessie's fame as a midwife and nurse soon became only equalled by her fame as a spaewife. She told anxious farmers where such a man's coat was, another's plough-irons, and she disclosed the thief who stole Lady Blair's body-linen. Envious midwives, angry bone-setters, and jealous fortune-tellers soon conspired against poor Bessie. Poor, weakly, crafty woman no doubt, to gain a higher reputation among her poor ignorant country patients, she had trumped up all this story about the ghost of old Thom, and had even shown a green silk lace which she wound round the left arms of women at their time of delivery as a talisman brought for her by that very old soldier from the Queen of Fairyland herself.

Oh what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive.

Too late, with her limbs crushed in the terrible boots, her ribs snapping on the rack, her poor fingers bleeding in the "pilniewinks," Bessie Jake lamented that she had ever boasted of meeting a soldier's ghost, or a fairy queen. In her delirium, her brain gone, she rambled on with fresh lies about having frequently seen Thom handling goods, like any decent living body, at the Edinburgh market. The last time she met him, said the groaning woman, he had told her she would soon be arrested, but assured her that she would be well treated, and eventually cleared. Lies, lies all, even if the biggest ghost ever rapped up had spoken those words. To the fire she was hurried, and the lies were burnt out of her miserable body in the sight of a pitiless multitude that blackened the Castle Hill of Edinburgh.

Following down the black rings that mark the burning place of these victims of cruel and stupid superstition, we come, in 1590, to John Fian, alias Cunningham, a poor parish schoolmaster at Saltpans, Lothian, who was discovered to occupy the onerous office of secretary and registrar-general to the devil. The witnesses, who feared or disliked this unhappy scholar, deposed that Satan had appeared to him all in white one night as he lay in bed, thinking how he could be revenged on Thomas Turnbull, his landlord, for not white-washing his room as per agreement. It was sworn that to obtain this revenge Fian had sworn allegiance to Satan, and received his recruiting mark, to wit, two

pins thrust under his tongue up to their heads. After a trance of three hours in Turnbull's chamber, the poor schoolmaster had told the foolish and suspicious country people of how he had been transported to various mountains half round the world. Under torture, following the lead of dangerous and entrapping questions, the schoolmaster confessed that he had done homage to Satan as he stood in the pulpit of North Berwick Church. To his witch congregation, Satan had said, during a short but appropriate sermon:

"Many come to the fair, but all sell not wares; fear not, though I am grim, for I have many servants who shall never ail or want so long as their hair is on, and never shall a tear fall from their eyes so long as they serve me. Spare not to do evil, eat, drink, and be blithe, take rest and ease, for I will raise you up on the latter day gloriously."

Fian had also entered into a league with Satan and a gang of witches and wizards to wreck King James on his return from Denmark, where he had visited Ann, his future wife. It was also deposed that at the witches' Sabbath in North Berwick Church, Fian and the crew had passed round the church "widdershins," that is, contrary to the sun's course. Fian opened the strong church door by blowing into the lock, and then puffed in the lights, which very properly burned blue, and appeared as big black candles held by old men's hands all round the pulpit. Satan appeared as a huge black man with a black beard like that of a goat, a high ribbed nose like a hawk's beak, and a long tail. He wore a black gown, and an "evil-favoured" black skull-cap on his head, and preached with a black book in his hand, telling them if they would be good servants to him, he would be a good master to them, and that they should never want. He made the witches all very angry on one occasion, by forgetting the proprieties so much as to call one Rob by his christian name. The congregation all ran "hirdie-girdie" at this, in surprise and consternation, but, nevertheless, no public apology seems to have been made. Fian had also, as he confessed under torture, dug up dead bodies and dismembered them to make charms. At the house of one David Seaton it was sworn that he had opened a lock by merely breathing into the hand of an old wife sitting by the fire. Another time four lighted candles sprang out of his horse's head, and a fifth arose on the staff

which his servant carried. These candles gave a light equal to the sun at noon, and the terrified man seeing them, fell dead on his own doorstep. Fian sent an evil spirit to torment an enemy of his for twenty weeks. He chased a cat, and in the chase "levitated," as Mr. Home would say, up in the air and clean over a hedge. He wanted the cat to fling into the sea to produce shipwrecks. He bewitched a young maiden, and even made a pet cow miraculously follow him even into his schoolroom. He cast horoscopes, and wore moleskins. To make him confess to all this fantastic nonsense, much torturing was requisite. They first bound his head with a rope, and twisted it tight and tighter for an hour. But this did not educe anything but groans. Then they put on the dreaded "boots," and crushed his legs to a pulp. On the third stroke of the cruel wedges he fainted. Then they searched him for the "devil's mark." When he recovered, to stop further tortures he made the above confession, adding that the devil had appeared to him just then, all in black, but carrying a white wand.

On Doctor Fian's renouncing the devil and all his works (it was about time), the evil spirit, he said, angrily broke the white wand he carried, and disappeared. The next day the poor wretch recanted, and then the monsters invented fresh tortures, but he was resolute now, and would invent no more lies. On a January Saturday, 1591, he escaped from their cruelty in a fire on the Castle Hill. Other members of Fian's gang were also dragged to the stake, after endless examinations, that lasted a whole winter, before that miserable pedant, James the First. Agnes Simpson, generally known as the "wise wife of Keith," after dreadful tortures, confessed that she and two hundred other witches had gone to sea in sieves on All Halloween, laughing and drinking as they sailed.

The witnesses against her complained of her using nonsensical rhymes, for the instructing of ignorant people and teaching them to pray; among others, these two prayers, the Black and White Pater Noster, to be used morning and evening:

White Pater Noster,
God was my fosterer.
He fostered me
Under the Book of palm tree.
Saint Michael was my dame,
He was born at Bethlehem.
He was made of flesh and blood,
God send me my right food;
My right food and dyne too,
That I may to yon kirk go.

To read upon yon sweet Book,
Which the Mighty God of Heaven stoop,
Open, open, Heavens yaits,
Steik, steik, Hello yaits,
All saints be the better,
That hear the White Prayer, Pater Noster.

The Black Pater Noster ran thus:

Four newks in this house, for holy angels,
A post in the midst, that's Christ Jesus,
Lucas, Marcus, Matthew, Joannes,
God be into this house and all that belangs us.

When she sought for an answer from the devil on any occasion, he appeared to her in the shape of a dog; the way of dismissing and conjuring him to go was this, "I charge thee to depart on the law thou lives on," as she did when she dismissed him after her consulting him about old Lady Edmiston's sickness. But the manner how she raised the devil was with these words, "Eloa, come and speak to me, who came in the likeness of a dog." Her sailing with her cummers and fellow-witches in a boat to a ship was very remarkable: the devil caused her and them to drink good wine and beer without money, she neither seeing the mariners nor the mariners her. And after all the devil raised a wind, whereby the ship perished. She baptised a cat to hinder Queen Ann from coming into Scotland.

In her own confession to King James she said that "the devil, in man's likeness, met her going out to the fields from her own house at Keith, betwixt five and six at even, being alone, and commanded her to be at North Berwick Kirk the next night, to which place she came on horseback, conveyed by her good son, called John Couper, and lighted near the kirk-yard about eleven hours at even. They danced along the kirk-yard, Geilie Duncan playing on a trumpe, and John Fian, muffled, led the king. The said Agnes and her daughter followed next. Besides, there were Kate Gray, George Moilis, his wife, Robert Grierson, Katherine Duncan, Bessie Wright, Isabel Gilmore, John Graymail, Duncan Buchanan, Thomas Barnhill and his wife, Gilbert Mackgill, John Mackgill, Katherine Mackgill, with the rest of their cummers, above one hundred persons, whereof there were six men, and all the rest women. The women made first their courtesy to their maister, and then the men. The men turned nine times widdershins about, and the women six times. The devil started up himself in the pulpit like a mickle black man, and calling the roll, every one answered, 'Here.'

"The first thing Satan demanded was if they kept all promise, and had been good

servants, and what they had done since the last time they had convened. At his command they opened up three graves—two within and one without the kirk, and cutting off from the dead corps the joints of their fingers, toes, and nose, parted them amongst them, and she (Agnes Sympson) got for her part a winding-sheet and two joints. The devil commanded them to keep the joints upon them while they were dry, and then to make a powder of them to do evil withall. Then he bade them to keep his commandments, which were to do all the evil and mischief they could. Before they departed and were dismissed they behoved to kiss this diabolical preacher."

In the churchyard at North Berwick, Geillis Duncan, a half-crazed servant-girl, had led the dance, playing a tune called *Gyllatripes* on the jew's-harp. The devil had confessed to her (well-devised flattery, but fruitless), that James was a man of God and his greatest enemy. She and some other witches had sunk a vessel on one occasion, and on another baptised a cat. Doctor Fian, she owned, acted as secretary and registrar at their meetings. She, too, went to the ever-ready bonfire. Barbara Napier, wife of an Edinburgh burgess, and sister-in-law to the Laird of Carschoggill, was acquitted, much to the rage and regret of the Scottish Solomon. A lady of good family, Euphemia Maclean, daughter of Lord Cliftonhall, was burnt about the same time, probably all the sooner for being a Catholic and a friend of the hated Bothwell. The year after, a man named Richard Graham was burnt at the Cross in Edinburgh for boasting of having a familiar spirit at his beck, and also for raising a devil in the court-yard of the house of Sir Lewis Ballantyne, in the Canongate, an apparition which, by-the-bye, frightened poor Sir Lewis to death.

The foolish book on *Demonology*, written by King James before he ascended the English throne, gave a great impetus to the persecution of witches. Draves of old women were hurried to the flames. What special opinions the sapient king held, our readers may gather from the following extracts, which are the very gist of the whole farrago of learned nonsense, which at least did this good to the world, that it probably gave some hints to Shakespeare for his wonderful witches in *Macbeth*.

"**EPISTEMON.** In their actions used towards others, three things ought to be considered; first, the manner of their consulting therefrom; next, their part as instruments; and last, their master's part, who puts the

same in execution. As to their consultations therefrom, they use them ofttest in the churches, where they convene for adoring, at what time their master inquiring of them what they would be at, every one of them proposes unto him what wicked torture they would have done, either for obtaining of riches, or for revenging them upon any whom they have malice at; who granting their demaund, as no doubt willingly he will, since it is to doe evil, he teacheth them the meanes whereby they may doe the same; as for little trifling turnes that woman have adoe with, he causeth them to joynt dead corpses, and to make powders thereof, mixing such other things there amongst as he gives unto them. That fourth kinde of spirits, which by the Gentiles was called *divine*, and her wondering court and amongst was called the *Phairie*, or our 'good neighbours,' was one of the sorts of illusions that was rifest in the time of *Papistrie*; for although it was holden odious to prophesie by the divel, yet whom these kind of spirits caried away, and formed, they were thought to be sonsiest, and of best life. To speak of the many vain trottles founded upon that illusion—how there was King and Queen of *Phairie* of such a jolly court and traine as they had, how they rode and went, eat, and drink, and did all other actions like naturall men and women, I think it were liker *Virgil's* *Campi Elysii*, nor anything that ought to be beleevd by Christians, except in generall, that as I spake sundrie times before, the divell iluded the senses of sundrie simple creatures, in making them beleve that they saw and heard such things as were nothing so indeed.

"**PHILOMATHES.** But how can it be then that sundrie witches have gone to death with that confession, that they have been transported with the *Phairie* to such a hill, which opening, they went in and saw a faire queen, who being now lighter, gave them a stone that had sundrie virtues, which at sundrie times hath been produced in judgement?"

"**EPI.** I say that even as I said before of that imaginar ravishing of the spirit forth of the bodie; for may not the divel object to their fantasie, their senses being dulled, and as it were asleepe, such hilles and houses within them, such glistering courtes and traines, and whatsoever such-like wherewith he pleaseth to delude them, and in the mean time their bodies being senselesse, to convey in their hande any stone or such like thing, which he makes them to imagine to have received in such a place."

Of the burning of old Major Weir and his sister on the Gallows Hill, near Edinburgh, in 1670, traditions still exist.

Mr. Sinclair, a fatuous professor of philosophy at Glasgow University, thus describes the event :

"Major Thomas Weir was born in Clydesdale, near to Lanerk, and he had been a lieutenant in Ireland long since. What way he came to get some publick command in the city of Edinburgh, in the year '49 and '53, we know not, but it seems he had always been called Major Weir since that time. It seems he had some charge over the waiters at the ports of the city, being, as it were, a check to them. Coming one day, as his custome was, he found some of them in a cellar, taking a cup of ale, neglecting their charge. After a gentle reproof, one of them replied that, some of their number being on duty, the rest had retired to drink with their old friend and acquaintance Mr. Burn. At which word he started back, and, casting an eye upon him, repeated the word Burn four or five times ; and, going home, he never any more came abroad till a few weeks after he had discovered his impieties. It was observed by some that, going to Liberton, he sometimes shunned to step over Liberton-burn, and went about to shun it. Some have conjectured that he had advise to beware of a burn or some other thing which this equivocal word might mean. If so, he had foreseen his day approaching. A year before he discovered himself he took a sore sickness, during which time he spake to all who visited him like an angel, and came frequently abroad again.

"This man, taking some dreadful tortures of conscience, and the terrours of the Almighty being upon his spirit, confessed to several neighbours in his own house, and that most willingly, his particular sins which he was guilty of, which bred amazement to all persons, they coming from a man of so high a repute of religion and piety. He ended with this remarkable expression : 'Before God,' says he, 'I have not told you the hundred part of that I can say more and am guilty of.' These same abominations he confessed before the judges likewise. But after this he would never to his dying hour confess any more, which might have been for the glorifying of God and the edification of others, but remained stupid, having no confidence to look any man in the face, or to open his eyes.

"When two of the magistrates came to his house in the night time, to carry him to prison, they asked if he had any money

to secure ? He answered, none. His sister said there was, whereupon, to the value of five dollars, in parcels here and there, were found in several clouts. His sister advised the two magistrates to secure his staff especially ; for she also went to prison. After he was secured in the Tolbooth, the bailies returned, and went into a tavern near to Weir's house, in the West Bow, a street so called there. The money was put into a bag, and the clouts thrown into the fire by the master of the house and his wife, which, after an unusual manner, made a circling and dancing in the fire. There was another clout found, with some hard thing in it, which they threw into the fire likewise ; it being a certain root which circled and sparkled like gunpowder, and passing from the tunnel of the chimney, it gave a crack like a little cannon, to the amazement of all that were present.

"The money aforesaid was taken by one of the two bailies to his own house, and laid by in his closet. After family prayer was ended, he retired into the same closet (where I have been), during which time his wife (who is yet living) and the rest of the family were affrighted with a terrible noise within the study, like the falling of an house, about three times together. His wife, knocking, gave a fearful cry : 'My dear, are you alive ?' The bailie came out unafraid, having (as he said) heard nothing. The money was presently sent away to the other bailie's house, a great distance from Weir's, where, as was reported, there was some disturbance, but in broken expressions.

"During the time of his imprisonment Weir was never willing to be spoken to, and when the ministers of the city offered to pray for him he would cry out in fury, 'Torment me no more, for I am tormented already.' One minister (now asleep), asking him if he should pray for him, was answered, 'Not at all.' The other replied in a kind of holy anger, 'Sir, I will pray for you in spite of your teeth, and the devil your master too,' who did pray, making him at least to hear him ; but the other, staring wildly, was senseless as a brute. Another, who is likewise at rest, demanded if he thought there was a God. Said the man, 'I know not.' That other smartly replied, 'Oh, man, the argument that moveth me to think there is a God is thyself, for what else moved thee to inform the world of thy wicked life.' But Weir answered, 'Let me alone.' When he peremptorily forbade one of his own parish ministers (yet alive) to pray, one demanded

if he would have any of the Presbyterian persuasion to pray. He answered, 'Sir, you are now all alike to me.' Then said the minister to him, 'I will pray with you.' 'Do it not,' said the other, 'upon your peril,' looking up to the beams of the house. But prayer was offered up so much the more heartily, because the company about expected some vision. It is observable that, in things common, he was pertinent enough; but when anything about Almighty God and his soul's condition came about, he would shrug and rub his coat and breast, saying to them, 'Torment me not before the time.' When he was at the stake to be burnt, the city minister called to a churchman there looking on, being one of that persuasion whereof Weir was formerly deemed to be, to speak to him; but no sooner he opened his mouth, than he made a sign with his hand and his head to be silent. When the rope was about his neck to prepare him for the fire, he was bid say, 'Lord be merciful to me!' But he answered, 'Let me alone, I will not; I have lived as a beast, and I must die as a beast.' The fire being kindled, both he and his staff, a little after, fell into the flames. Whatever incantation was in his staff is not for me to discuss. He could not officiate in any holy duty without this rod in his hand, and leaning upon it, which made those who heard him pray admire his fluency in prayers. Its falling into the fire with him (let others search out the disparity) minds me of this passage. In Shetland a few years ago a judge having condemned an old woman and her daughter, called Helen Stewart, for witchcraft, sent them to be burned. The maid was so stupid that she was thought to be possessed. When she had hung some little time on the gibbet a black, pitchy-like ball foamed out of her mouth; and after the fire was kindled it grew to the bigness of a walnut, and then flew up like squibs into the air, which the judge, yet living, attests. It was taken to be a visible sign that the devil was gone out of her.

"Some few days before he discovered himself, a gentlewoman coming from the Castle Hill, where her husband's niece was laying-in of a child, about midnight perceived about the Bow-head three women in windows, shouting, laughing, and clapping their hands. The gentlewoman went forward, till just at Major Weir's door there arose, as from the street, a woman above the length of two ordinary females, and stepped forward. The gentlewoman, not as yet excessively feared, bid her maid step

on, if by the lanthorn they could see what she was; but haste what they could, this long-legged spectre was still before them, moving her body with a vehement cackination—a great unmeasurable laughter. At this rate the two strove for place, till the giantess came to a narrow lane in the Bow, commonly called the Stinking Closs, into which she turned; and the gentlewoman looking after her, perceived the Closs full of flaming torches (she could give them no other name), and as it had been a great multitude of people, stentoriously laughing and gapping with takies of laughter."

The major's poor old half-crazed sister came next to the gallows. She confessed various horrible crimes, which most probably had never been committed. She also owned that the Queen of the Fairies had helped her in spinning, and that her brother and friend, soon after the battle of Worcester, had driven to Dalkeith in a (most uncomfortable!) fiery chariot. On the scaffold the poor wretch tried to strip off her clothes, in order to die with the greatest shame possible, and the rough executioner had at last to fling her by force from the ladder. Her last words were true to the sect to which her brother had claimed to belong:

"Many," she said, "weep and lament for a poor old wretch like me, but, alas! few are weeping for a broken covenant."

Sir Walter Scott, in his *Demonology and Witchcraft*, describes Major Weir's house, at the head of the West Bow, as then in the course of being destroyed. It was a gloomy, high-storied structure, with the usual outside stairs of the Old Town fortresses of poverty, and it had been alternately a brazier's shop and a magazine for lint. In his High School days, Sir Walter Scott says, "no family would inhabit the haunted house, and bold was the urchin who dared approach the gloomy ruin, at the risk of seeing the major's enchanted staff parading through the old apartments, or hearing the hum of his sister's necromantic wheel."

In 1727, the last witch was burnt in Scotland. She was a poor, half imbecile old Highland woman, near Littledean, in Sutherland, who was accused of having induced the devil to shoe her lame daughter, to serve as a horse on which to ride to witches' meetings. The poor old crone (and how pathetic the picture is!) is said to have sat by the fire prepared for her death warming herself calmly, while the wood was being heaped ready for the execution. In 1736, the cruel witchcraft Act

was repealed, much to the anger of the more zealous Presbyterians.

The last authentic witch-trial in England, according to Mrs. Linton, who has studied the subject, and written a most interesting book upon it, was in 1712, when Jane Wenham, of Walkerne, a little village in the north of Hertfordshire, was sentenced to death, but eventually, thanks to a humane judge, obtained a pardon. Yet still this wise and over self-satisfied century must remember that so conservative are folly and superstition, that only the other day an English labourer was brought before a magistrate for trying to disenchant himself by scoring a supposed witch "above the breath."

ONLY A PASSING THOUGHT.

'Twas only a passing thought, my friend,
Only a passing thought,
That came o'er my mind like a ray of the sun
In the ripple of waters caught;
As it seemed to me, as I say to thee,
That sorrow, and shame, and sin
Might disappear from our happy sphere,
If we knew but to begin,
If we knew but how to profit
By wisdom dearly bought:
'Twas only a passing thought, my friend,
Only a passing thought.

Why should the nations fight, my friend,
Why should not warfare cease,
And all the beautiful world repose
In innocence and peace?
It seems to me, as I say to thee,
The weak may yet be strong;
There needs but the breath of love and faith
To right the weary wrong,
To right the weary wrong, my friend,
Throughout the world mistaught:
'Twas only a passing thought, my friend,
Only a passing thought.

But though only a passing thought, my friend,
You know as well as I
That thoughts have a fashion to grow to deeds
Under the ripening sky.
So pass it on; let it walk or run,
Or fly on the wings of the wind,
Or, better still, on the wings of the press,
For the service of mankind;
For the service of mankind, my friend,
That needs but to be taught:
'Twas only a passing thought, my friend,
Only a passing thought.

AMONG THE MARKETS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

LET us stroll along Coventry-street, and across Leicester-square, that spot dear to the heart of the refugee—famous for its regular production of dead cats as some unworthy fields are for their regular crops of stones—and turning up a narrow court to our left, we shall find ourselves all at once in Newport Market.

Struggling through a chaos of vegetables, we are in a long, narrow, paved

alley, crowded thickly on either side with butchers' shops. "Buy! buy! what'e buy?" is the word. Brisk acolytes skirmish around us, brandishing formidable knives and truculent-looking cleavers. Joints, prime, middle, and common, hang about in sanguinary profusion; while a brisk business is going on in smaller pieces, scrag, sticking-piece, or those mysterious morsels of meat popularly known as "block ornaments." Hither come the proprietors of dingy restaurants scattered about Soho, where melancholy imitations of French dishes—alas! how different from the divine originals—are vended, at infinitesimal prices, to seedy men in strange attire—men full of schemes for the regeneration of mankind, but inappreciative of the virtues of clean linen—men skilled in many sciences and learned in various tongues, but ignorant, it would seem, of the chemical operation of soap and water when briskly applied to the human body.

Hither, too, at the stroke of noon, comes the British artisan in quest of his simple, but wholesome, strength-giving dinner. Tom Painter walks up to the shop he most affects, and with a scornful glance at the odds and ends—heart, liver, and other "innards"—with an impatient push past leathern-faced old hags chaffering for block ornaments, turning over with unwashed hands, and even testing by the evidence of their olfactory organs the freshness of a doubtful morsel—T. P. selects a prime piece of beef, commands the butcher to cut him his half-pound of steak from that piece, and "just there," indicating with his finger the favoured spot. Having carefully wrapped his steak in a fresh cabbage-leaf, T. P. now hies him to the "pub" he "uses." Ordering his pint of beer, and handing over his meat to the attendant sprite, Tom whiles away the time with the Morning Advertiser till his steak arrives hissing hot, and falling to with relish, the honest fellow heartily enjoys his well-earned meal.

Our friend Tom has probably consumed as much, if not in actual weight, certainly in money value, as would, laid out to better advantage, and aided by a little decent cookery, have provided a meal for his entire family; but Tom has an honest and thoroughly English horror of any piece of meat not distinctly traceable to the animal and portion of the animal whence it was hewed. "Likes to know," he says, "whether it's dog or whether it's horse," and abhors all messes and kickshaws as only fit for Frenchmen, who being brought up, and even weaned on frogs, of course know no

better. If his work be not too far off, T. P. indulges in "a pipe and half a screw," and during his dinner-hour is a happy man. Perhaps the only comfortable hour out of his twenty-four is the one spent on the sanded floor of the Cantankerous Crocodile, for his home is not a very cheerful one, poor fellow. The "missis" does her best, good soul, but the "kids" are always teething or having the measles, and as soon as Tommy gets over the croup, Jenny is barking her poor little heart out with the hooping-cough.

Large baskets, resting on the stalwart arms of stout Frenchwomen, come to Newport Market, and are certain to be stored with the cheaper pieces of meat, not forgetting bones for soup-making, eggs, and endless onions, mighty carrots, and crisp heads of celery, peering cunningly from beneath the half-opened basket lid. All this carefully assorted vegetable matter will convert the humble shin of beef into the savoury dishes denounced by our friend T. P. as "messes."

The swine—savoury food of the Saxon—is well represented in Newport Market. For roasting or boiling, either to be served brown and crisp with toothsome crackling, or seethed to serve as an humble hand-maiden to the delicate capon or lordly turkey. Sausages in endless rows tempt those admirers within whom faith is not dead; tripe, and eke cow-heel, excite the gastronomic propensities of the boys who hail from "Brummagem." On Wednesdays and Fridays there is a brisk trade doing in tripe. Wholesome and tender tripe is a decided favourite, owing, possibly, to its elastic properties. Deftly prepared with onions and milk, it yields to no food in the world for lightness and digestibility; fried in batter, it makes a more ostentatious dish, while, if cheapness be the main object to be attained, it can be eaten, by a hungry man, cold, as purchased in the tripe-seller's shop. Many years ago, I knew a foreign gentleman (slightly at issue with the powers reigning on the continent of Europe at that time, in consequence of a benevolent project he had once entertained for blowing the Germanic Diet into the air), who generally commenced the day (about two P.M.) with a light repast consisting of a cup of coffee, a cigarette, and a game of chess at a neighbouring cigar-shop, preserving, by this temperate breakfast, an unimpaired appetite for dinner. On tripe days, at the canonical hour of six P.M., he visited the tripe-shop, and selecting a choice morsel

of "the double," dined gloriously upon the same, assisted only by a lump of bread, a pinch of salt, and a pint of "aff-naff."

Late on certain evenings the nostrils of the wanderer in Newport Market are assailed by an odour of exceeding savouriness. This hunger-compelling scent proceeds from a singular dish called "faggots," all hot—round lumps compounded, it is believed, chiefly of the interior organs of animals, highly seasoned; the faggot is, indeed, a sort of degenerate Southron imitation of the Scottish national dish, haggis. Hungry children crowd round the steaming dishes of brown and savoury spheres, greedily inhaling the delightful odour, while those happy in the accidental possession of "browns," rush to gratify their appetites in more substantial fashion. Under the flaring gas-lights slipshod girls, carrying basins hidden under their pinafores, bear off triumphantly their supper to the poor home, where probably even such slender meals as "faggots" afford are somewhat scarce.

Hidden away in the dingy regions of Finsbury is a small market, the site whereof is now advertised for sale. The huge board announcing the approaching sale and demolition of the entire institution would in itself produce a depressing effect were it not at once evident that the market has probably nearly abolished itself. If any business were ever done there it must have all been done with long ago. There appears to be very little meat for sale at Finsbury Market, the wealth of its wares seeming rather to consist of stray bunches of attenuated-looking carrots, forlorn turnips, pale with rage at their excessive distance from anything resembling a leg of mutton, and hopeless potatoes, evidently wishing that the sack were closed over their eyes, weary with looking for the customers who never come. On mature reflection I have come to the conclusion that the market is only kept open through downright English adherence to obsolete forms, that the merchants expose a few vegetables for form's sake only, and then consume the dusty carrots, forlorn turnips, and gritty salads themselves. The whole neighbourhood has a weary and seedy air, as if it were tired of the sham, and would be heartily glad of the advent of some newer and stronger organisation.

Let us go on through some sleepy-looking streets till Curtain-road is at last reached, and here it seems at the first blush as if the entire population were about to undertake the operation known as "shooting

the moon." Furniture in the roads, furniture in the pathways, furniture in passages. Everywhere nothing but chairs and sofas, ready packed for travelling. On closer inspection, however, it turns out that all this furniture is entirely new, and that furniture is the staple product of this remote region. Shoreditch Church now heaves in sight, and a little beyond it is a very imposing pile of building in the Italian Gothic style. This is Columbia Market, built at an immense expense by the Baroness Burdett Coutts, and by that munificent lady presented a few weeks since to the corporation of the City of London.

London is famous for its surprises: elegant churches buried in reeking slums, and ambitious mausoleums rearing their heads in the back yards of dismal, gaunt-looking warehouses, are common enough, but the traveller is scarcely prepared for so rich an architectural apparition as Columbia Market in the dreary regions of Shoreditch. Its construction came about in this wise. Some few years ago, during the reign of Sir Richard Mayne, that autocrat issued a ukase, decreeing the virtual abolition of the costermonger. The kerbstone business was henceforth to cease. The coster himself was to share the fate of the "Charley," and such like old world entities, he, his fur cap, his highlows, his plush waistcoat, glittering with pearl buttons, his short-pipe, his "kingsman," his "White-chapel brougham" and his "Jerusalem pony," were to be relegated to the limbo of extinct institutions. The Baroness Burdett Coutts at once extended her warmest sympathy to the poor fellows who were to be suddenly deprived of the only livelihood they were capable of earning.

Much marvelling "where the poor donkeys lived," this charitable lady decided on building a market, which should, by removing the kerbstone traffic to one central spot, enable the poor itinerant retailer to sell his little stock of rabbits, fish, or vegetables without falling under the ban of the police. The present site was selected, a network of dirty streets and noisome alleys disappeared as if by magic, and the new market was commenced in earnest. No sooner was that market fairly begun than, with the consistency and steadiness of purpose so eminently characteristic of our police magnates, the late czar rescinded his severe edict, and the costermonger, endowed with a fresh lease of life, knotted his kingsman round his

brawny throat, hitched his much-enduring donkey to his barrow, and proclaimed the excellence of his wares in louder and hoarser tones than ever. Meanwhile the designs for the market assumed grander proportions, and a stately structure astonished the eyes of the natives of Shoreditch and Bethnal Green.

The original benevolent purpose of the noble founder being rendered abortive, the building was continued on a more ambitious scale than had been intended, and the present handsome structure was opened as a general market, on April the 28th, 1869. A large quadrangle for the wholesale dealers was enclosed by handsome Gothic houses, shops for retailers, and pretty arched colonnades, with abundant stone benches, probably for the accommodation of "loafers" generally. The market was opened, it is true, and only required two elements to insure success, that is, buyers and sellers. Nobody took anything there to sell, and if he had done so nobody would have gone there to buy it; the costermonger preferred, as an astute man of business, his regular beat, regular customers, and certain profits; the few adventurous spirits who had speculated to the extent of taking shops or stands, gave it up as a bad job, and in too many cases "skedaddled," in defiance of the laws of landlord and tenant.

Proving an utter failure as a retail market, the Columbia building was reopened as a wholesale fish market, on February the 21st, 1870, and dragged on a languid existence till a short time ago, when the generous baroness handed over the entire property, costing little less than three hundred thousand pounds, to the corporation, engaging herself to build, at a further cost of sixty thousand pounds, a tramway to the terminus of the Eastern Counties Railway. It is not altogether impossible that when the tramway is completed (within two years hence), Columbia Market, in the hands of the City authorities, will become a formidable rival, if not the absolute successor of Billingsgate. The railway connexion with Harwich being made perfect, fishing-sloops will be able to discharge their cargoes at that port into railway cars running straight from Harwich into the market itself, thus saving all the time occupied in the tedious voyage up the Thames. The great bogey, Vested Interest, will rear his head on high, fight his hardest to defeat this project, and raise innumerable difficulties, according to custom, but the direct communication with Harwich

once established, the great advantages of the new market will soon be made manifest.

I wonder what the effect of such a change will be on the manners and customs of the whilom frequenters of Billingsgate! Will the refining and elevating influence of an Italian Gothic building do aught to remove that singular loudness of tongue and asperity of manner for which Billingsgate is justly notorious? Will that fine old vernacular, rich in expletives, apt for repartee, become, like ancient Cornish, one of the lost tongues? Will the rough tongue of the ancient dweller in the fish market wax smooth and soft, under the shadow of Mr. Darbyshire's airy spires and graceful arches? It will afford an interesting study for Professor Max Müller to watch the gradual softening of the coarser oaths at present in use to the mild or Mantalini style of execration, and, finally, to note the entire extinction of "cussin" generally, thanks to the happy application of æsthetic architecture.

In Church-street, Marylebone, over against the Marylebone, or Royal Alfred Theatre, is held on Fridays, not the largest, but certainly the most miscellaneous market in London. Such a wonderful omnium gatherum of all imaginable articles necessary or unnecessary, useful or pernicious, does not exist within the bounds of our wide metropolis.

Provender for man and beast—sweet-smelling hay and prime marbled wing-ribs of beef, second-hand clothes and saddles of mutton, Cheshire cheese and rusty ironmongery, crisp, curly savoy and blonde chignons, mellow pears and second-hand stewpans, white-hearted celery and black American or pink Chinese radishes, watercresses and fireworks, humming-tops, ripe apples, bows and arrows and blacking, rump-steaks, needles, and fire-irons, candles and crockery, fresh butter and the last popular ballad, hoop-skirts, eggs and artificial flowers, boots, bulbs, and piping bullfinches, hot sausages and pea-jackets, pens, paper, envelopes, and hair brushes, virgin vinegar and vermin-destroyer, quaint beer jugs, green broom, wooden skewers, looking-glasses, chickweed and ground-sel for your singing-birds, chairs and corduroys, pigeons and potatoes, geese, green sage and ropes of onions, mutton pies and Dundee marmalade, pictures and pickles, tripe, trotters, and teetotal tracts—the latter, it may be remarked, inculcating principles much at variance with

the practice of the neighbourhood. The sale of these small wares is not effected without protracted negotiations, torrents of chaff, and so much wild vociferation (richly garnished with potent adjectives), that the exhausted purchasers are often reduced to the necessity of making straight for the nearest public-house, then and there to recruit their exhausted energies with "a drain." Numerous idlers are vouchsafing the sanction of their presence—members, mostly, of that mysterious class defined in the police-sheet as labourers—labourers who, most probably, have been out of work for the last twenty years or thereabouts.

One of a group clustered on the pathway outside a public-house near this market once gave the writer a wondrous surprise. This ill-favoured loafer detached himself from his "pals," and followed me through all my peregrinations among butchers' shops and toffy stalls, till I began to weary of his undesirable attention. When I stopped to observe a knot of old women haggling over a shawl, and handling that rather tender garment so roughly as to render imminent an immediate solution of continuity, he stopped also. While I was attentively considering the singing-birds, he was attentively considering me. Having up to the moment of writing escaped incarceration for any penal offence, I was at a loss to imagine where I could have met my too persistent follower—he haunted me like a very ill-looking shadow, and pursued me even along Church-street itself. Resolved to shake him off, I quickened my pace, and suddenly missed my escort—he had disappeared—not into a gin-shop, but a bookseller's. He presently emerged with a paper in his hand, and walked rapidly away. Mechanically I felt my pockets—conscious as I was of their emptiness, and then, being suddenly attacked with a fit of curiosity, plunged into the bookseller's and inquired what work my burglarious-looking friend had purchased. It was *The Christian Year*!

TAKEN ON TRIAL.

ANY one who has once passed through the principal streets of Southampton need have no difficulty in predicting the style of persons certain to be found therein on the occasion of his next visit. The floating population there varies daily, but it has always the same characteristics, and it must

continue to retain them, until, in the course of events, the great commercial maritime companies select some other port as the spot whence their splendid steam fleets shall be despatched, where their vast stores shall be warehoused, and where the large contingent of men and women of all ranks who are dependent on them shall be quartered and domiciled. Until that day arrives you shall continue, even in the short time occupied by your transit from the railway to the docks, to meet with brown-faced ayahs shivering with the cold, and staring wildly about them; with blonde, blue-bloused Teutons, with their frousy wives and dirty children, emigrating to America, as deck passengers, in one of the steamers of the North German line; with jabbering Jew sloop-sellers, jewellers, outfitters, and pawn-brokers, who, if one may judge from the number of Hebraic names, more or less disguised, to be met with throughout the town, must do a large business in Southampton. Nor will you fail to find many officers of the commercial marine, stalwart, bronzed, and trim; many A. B.'s very much décolletés, with hats so far on the back of their heads as to give the appearance of a nimbus as seen in the old pictures of saints, with very loose trousers and rolling gait; many smart yachtsmen, who are to the sailors what all amateurs are to all professionals, as mock turtle to real; a few soldiers, and many loungers and loafers of the usual pattern. Make your way through this heterogeneous multitude, pass through the dockyard gates, keep clear of these rolling tubs, which are viscous and sticky, and probably full of palm-oil just brought home from Africa, put your best foot forward and make for yon flight of steps, at the top of which are standing some of the friends who are about to take us on trial, the trial on which we are to be taken being the trial trip of the screw steamer *Hooghly*, just built for the Peninsular and Oriental Company by Messrs. M'Whirter, of Greenock. Salutations are exchanged, we and our fellow-passengers in the same carriage from London descend into a small boat, and five minutes after pushing off from the shore, we are ascending the lowered gangway of the *Hooghly* as she lies in mid stream in Southampton water, with her steam up, ready for a start.

As the splendid ship glides through the smooth water, leaving the "two friendly spires of Southampton," the sight of which made Major Dobbin's heart beat so wildly on his return from India, far behind, pass-

ing Hythe and Netley, and emerging into something like blue water when Calshot Castle is at our backs, and the glorious Wight before us; as we inhale the delicious fresh air, mark the dancing waves, see the verdure-clothed cliffs, and the trim villas dotted here and there amongst them; or glide quickly past the beach where the bathers, the sand-diggers, and the promenaders can be discovered engaged in their holiday pastime, we begin to think that there may be in life even a greater pleasure than drawing legal deeds, there may be in England a more picturesque spot than Brick-court, Temple. All the Londoners present seem to be of similar opinion. The chairman of the company, whenever he is not engaged in courteously attending to his guests, seems bent upon inhaling through mouth and nostrils every possible particle of health-giving ozone. The directors, stern, unbending men of business in the City, pillars of the Stock Exchange, fathers of Lloyd's, elder brothers of the Trinity House, have put on wideawake hats which do not fit them, and borrowed telescopes, through which they see nothing but one round white disc; while some of the boldest among them are actually smoking. The two newspaper reporters who have been sent down "to do the trial" seem to be old acquaintances of the purser, under whose auspices they are already engaged in drinking brandy and soda-water, a process which they humourously designate as "splicing the mainbrace," and in talking over their recent and prospective engagements. The rest of the company are dispersed about, some sitting under the awning reading the morning papers; some, under the guidance of the officers, making a tour of inspection of the ship, peering into and praising the neatly appointed little sleeping-rooms (all the time inwardly congratulating themselves that they are not going to occupy them), or looking at the enormous engines, ever oscillating, leaping forward, and drawing back, ever threatening to crush the shiny-faced, greasy-jacketed man, who, with oil-can in one hand and flannel swab in the other, walks unharmed among them, ministering to their necessities and tending them as though they were human creatures in whom he had an interest. Meanwhile, the captain, the chief engineer, the Southampton superintendent, and the Admiralty officials, are gathered together in a little knot on the bridge, and are interchanging mutual congratulations, for the *Hooghly* has run the measured mile at Stokes Bay at more than

the average speed; her build, engines, and appointments are all pronounced to be first-class, and leaving Spithead and Portsmouth Harbour behind us, she is steaming away for her pleasure trip round the Isle of Wight. Soon in the distance we see the pier at Ryde, gay with brilliant parasols and female finery, and while we are straining our eyes to catch the first glimpse of Shanklin Chine, the word is passed round that dinner is ready, and the company generally adjourns below. Ah! the enormous joints of cold roast and boiled, the meat pie, manufactured especially by the cook of the Nubia, who happens to be on shore, and who is such a hand at such confection. Ah! the curry, staple dish in the P. and O. cuisine, with its rice so deftly boiled, and its sauce so cunningly concocted, that one ceases to wonder of what animal its component parts ever formed a portion! Ah! the speeches after dinner, the parliamentary-like eloquence of the chairman, the bland suavity of the government officials, and the broad Scotch accent in which at immense length Mr. McWhirter will give details of the building of the ship. Then, the cigar on deck in the calm evening, the charming view of Alum Bay and the Needles, and the return to Southampton in time for the last train to town.

Go, my friend, but let me linger! Of an inquisitive turn, I have been chatting with the superintendent, who has given me a certain amount of information about the affairs of this company, whose guests we have been, and has promised to initiate me into some of the mysteries of the manner in which its enormous organisation is satisfactorily managed and controlled.

Enormous organisation, truly, for the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company possesses a fleet far superior to that of many a so-called maritime power, undertakes and carries through successfully vast contracts which government would infallibly bungle, has, at every eastern port of any consequence, depôts and stations, each manned by a large and thoroughly trustworthy staff, all dependent on the general supervision of Leadenhall-street, and all working in one harmonious whole. The amount of capital with which in shares and debentures the P. and O. Company has to deal, is between three and four millions. Its property consists of a fleet of steamships forty-six in number, measuring by Customs register one hundred and two thousand seven hundred and three tons, and fitted with machinery of nineteen thousand

nine hundred and ninety horse-power; steam-tugs measuring nine hundred and sixty-four tons and three hundred and thirty-three horse-power; sailing transports, store and coal ships, measuring five thousand four hundred and eighty-two tons; also property on shore consisting of freehold and leasehold houses, offices, docks, wharves, coaling depôts, factories and repairing establishments in this country and at Bombay, Hong-Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Calcutta, Point de Galle, Aden, Suez, Alexandria, Malta, and other places; and stocks of coals, and marine, victualling, and other stores in depôt and in transit to these stations, the whole showing a value of upwards of three million five hundred thousand pounds, as stated in the last annual report. In order that this vast amount of capital may be properly applied, and to provide for the due superintendence and execution of the work undertaken by the company, fourteen principal and subsidiary establishments have to be kept up. Many of these are in parts of the world unfavourable to the health of Europeans, and the rates of remuneration to the superintendent, clerks, storekeepers, engineers, and artisans of all trades are high in proportion.

At the present time the company have in active service:

On shore :			
Agents and superintendents ...	26	Brought forward	275
European clerks and assistants ...	194	European mechanics and labourers ...	378
Native clerks ...	55	Native mechanics and labourers ...	1084
Carried forward	275		
		Total	1737
Afloat :			
Commanders ...	55	Brought forward	2099
Officers ...	229	Carpenters ...	36
Surgeons ...	43	Boatswains ...	43
Pursers ...	26	Quartermasters	
Clerks in charge	8	and gunners	145
Pursers' clerks ...	17	Able seamen ...	470
Engineers ...	253	Ordinary seamen	277
Boiler-makers ...	31	Native seamen ...	1387
European firemen	507	European stewards ...	473
Native "	930	Native stewards	301
Carried forward	2099	Total	5231
Afloat	5231
On shore	1737
		Total	6968

The above takes no account of the coal labourers and coolies employed at various stations in coaling operations.

The consumption of coal necessarily forms a conspicuous item in the company's accounts. A return extending over ten years, 1856 to 1865, both inclusive, showed

that the enormous sum of five millions and a quarter was paid for fuel only during that period, or on the average five hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds per annum. It must be remembered that the tendency of price during the last few years has been, and is still, to advance, and that coal deteriorates very much in hot climates, where, as stated by a competent witness, "it is very difficult to keep it so useful and so good, and it must be calculated that we require one-fourth more coal to do the same quantity of work." An average number of one hundred and seventy sailing ships is engaged annually in conveying coal to the company's stations.

The commissariat is another department which has to be anxiously looked after, and which, more than any other, affords a fertile source of complaint. The manner in which a ship should be handled is a technical matter, and there is probably not one in a thousand of the company's passengers in a position to comment upon the seamanship displayed by the captain or the crew. But there is no outgoing "griff," no home returning "Qui-li," who does not feel himself not merely competent to judge of, but bound to find fault with, the food placed before him, and who complains most bitterly if on board ship he does not meet with all the delicacies of the season, just as they would be served to him at the "Rag," in London, or the Byculla Club in Bombay. One of the greatest difficulties in providing a proper commissariat arises in the immense length of the company's lines. A steamer leaving Southampton for Alexandria can take in live and dead stock, poultry, fish, &c., of the best quality, and passengers will be struck with the style of table which a clever purser, assisted by good cooks and experienced stewards, is able to keep. But on the other side of the Isthmus of Suez, three-fourths of the stores have to be sent from England and kept in *dépôt* before they are issued to the steamers. Live stock (sheep excepted) and poultry are very inferior, and passengers whose appetites have been destroyed by many years residence in the tropics, are scarcely to be tempted even by the best of preserved meats, fish, and vegetables. It will scarcely be believed that by the P. and O. Company alone upwards of ten thousand persons are fed daily on board ship, but when that is taken into account, the enormous amounts included in their annual summary of stores will not appear excessive. Under the head of general stores,

expended from September, 1864, to the same month in 1865, we find a total in weight of fourteen million six hundred and two thousand five hundred and fourteen pounds. Of this total, bread, flour, &c., represented one million two hundred and sixty-two thousand four hundred and eighty-one pounds, vegetables two millions five hundred and ninety-three thousand three hundred and ninety-seven pounds, and ice three millions forty-six thousand and four pounds. This last item is one which demands special mention. Of ice, the company now consumes between fourteen and fifteen hundred tons per annum, costing in manufacture or by purchase between seven and eight thousand pounds. Twenty years ago this luxury was not looked for on board ship, and the Indian passenger would gladly have paid liberally for a supply. He now expects his cool beverage as a matter of course, and the exhaustion of the ice-house, on a voyage, is made a matter of grievous complaint. Going back to our summary we find that during the year we have quoted the consumption of wines, spirits, beer, &c., was one million three hundred and one thousand six hundred and eight bottles. Of these beverages, pale ale was by far the most popular, the consumption being five hundred and twenty-four thousand two hundred and fifty bottles; then came porter, one hundred and sixty-six thousand one hundred and nine bottles; soda-water, one hundred and thirty-two thousand four hundred and twenty-eight bottles; claret, one hundred and twenty-three thousand and fifty-nine bottles; sherry, one hundred and two thousand seven hundred and eleven bottles. In the same year nearly six hundred oxen, one thousand four hundred sheep, four hundred pigs, and one hundred and seventy thousand head of poultry, were sacrificed for the consumption of the company.

Although the head-quarters of the Peninsular and Oriental Company are, and have been, since its establishment thirty years ago, situate in London, the focus of its business may be said to be at Southampton. There its steamers arrive, and thence they depart; there are its stores, warehouses, artisans' shops, and *dépôts* for the heterogeneous mass of articles with which its stations throughout the eastern hemisphere have to be supplied. Under the guidance of the superintendent I go through these various establishments, which are situate in the immediate vicinity of the docks, and am

made acquainted with the manner of their organisation and administration. And, first, we are taken to the linen stores, through which all linen, whether new or old, belonging to the company, must pass before it is sent out to the ships. New linen, coming straight from the manufacturer, towels, pillow-cases, sheets, table-cloths, and napkins are all sent here to be stamped with the company's well-known cipher (the rising sun with the "Quis separabit" motto), a process which is so effectually performed that even when the ink has worn away the mark of the stamp still remains. Then, tied up in bundles, it is sent down the lift into the carts expecting it in the yard below, and carried to Shirley, a village a few miles off. Returned thence duly washed, the linen is placed in the drying-room, where it is thoroughly aired by means of the hot-water pipes with which the apartment is permeated, and thence distributed to the ships from which application for it has been received. Here in this linen-room things are on a no less gigantic scale than in the other portions of the establishment. The superintendent showed me an estimate of the quantities of material, linen, calico, huckaback, &c., which would be required during the coming year to supply the foreign agencies, and five new ships, and the amount was close upon one hundred and thirty-three thousand yards. When a ship arrives in port, all its linen is at once sent to the store, where it is opened and examined, to see what repairing is required. There are three or four women always employed in darning, and nearly a score in hemming and preparing the new linen for the ships. It is done up in bundles, two hundred and fifty of each article in every bundle, and stored away in an enormous closet fitted with racks. Here I was shown two thousand table-napkins, which had just arrived from Dunfermline, whence the table-linen is generally procured, the blankets and sheets coming from London. Now to the upholsterers' store, where ten men and several women are constantly at work. Here are made up all the beds and the cabin sofas, the wool pinned and carded, the sofas stuffed with horsehair prepared at the company's own manufactory. Old sofas and beds are sent here to be pulled to pieces and cleaned. New carpets and curtains (all carpets, curtains, stuffs, &c., come from London, from certain houses, and at certain prices, and are all of the same pattern) are sent here to be hemmed,

stitched, and fitted. Next to the pattern shop, where are the gauges for the different ships, templets, paddle-centres, valves, serving mallets, teeth for cog-wheels, and fire-bars of all sizes. But it is in the marine-store shop, which we visit next, that we find the most miscellaneous collection. Here are immense rolls of canvas, stocks of fire-irons, enormous coils of fire-hose, thousands of gallons of paint, kettle-handles, knobs, spouts, and ears, barometers, sheet-glass, grindstones, handspikes, curtain-rings and rods, hammocks, disinfecting fluid, emery-powder, mops, oars, torches, rat-traps, mast-head and bull's-eye lamps, drawer-knobs, ropes and hawsers of all sizes, pig-iron in hundredweights, locks in hundreds, nails in thousands, all kinds of bunting and special flags, cork fenders, lamp-wicks, and a curious composition known as "soojee muttee." When a ship arrives in harbour, application for whatever she wants is made to the marine-store shop, whence it is issued over the counter, after being subjected to a double system of check and counter-check. And it is a noticeable portion of the plan in operation here, that none of the packages in which articles of whatever kind are originally supplied to the P. and O. Company are retained by them. They are sent back whence they came, and are returned re-filled. This is advantageous to both parties, the company not having to provide space for use of lumber, and the suppliers having constantly renewed use of their property.

In addition to what I have already mentioned, there are pursers' supply stores, where are to be found in stock all the glass and china, knives and forks, cruet, together with oats, barley, bran, peas, preserved meats, soups, &c., for the ships' supply; the joiners' shop, where are manufactured the towel-horses, the bed-posts, the chairs, staircase rails, &c.; the painters' shops where they are painted and varnished; the bonded warehouse, where are stored the wines and spirits, the tea and sugar, in bond; the cooperage and bottling establishment, and the sail-loft, where several old tars, who have spent the best part of their lives in the company's service, are to be found mending the sails which their successors are to handle. Throughout the whole length and breadth of the establishment one cannot fail to be impressed with the admirable system which prevails, and which seems to insure a maximum of result with a minimum of discomfort to those by whom the work is performed.

And, although occasional depression of stock and reduction of dividend are naturally trying to the temper of shareholders, though A and B have each their indubitable remedy for what appear to them to be shortcomings and mismanagement, though Y could build the ships, and Z could man them, at half the present expense, there is little doubt that the P. and O. Company has, for the thirty odd years of its existence, been as highly thought of both by the government, whose contractor it is, and the public who are its customers, as by us, whom it has so obligingly taken on trial.

LELGARDE'S INHERITANCE.

IN TWELVE CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IX.

THERE was a long, long silence between us two, a silence, on my part, of bitter, angry disappointment. Let those who have never felt poverty despise me for dreading a return to it. I am not ashamed to own that the thought was gall and wormwood to me: though not for my own sake, Heaven knows.

"Perhaps he is dead," I said, at last; I could not help it; but Lelgarde stood with a brighter light in her eye and a deeper flush on her cheek than I had seen for many a day, and her first words took me by surprise.

"Thank God!" she said, heartily; then, in answer to my looks, I suppose: "Yes, thank God, the mystery is out; the wretched feeling I have had is gone."

She turned to the half-finished picture which we had hung on the wall, the picture in which the fair feeble face, with its light-hearted look, was piteous, when one thought of that poor weak child's after life.

"Rest in peace," Lelgarde said, solemnly; "the wrong shall be right at last. Oh! I thank God, I do thank him that I am freed from this crime, this injustice; and now, Joan, what is to be done?"

"These other papers may afford some clue, perhaps," conscience forced me to say.

"I hope so." And thereupon she sat down on a footstool, and spread out on her lap the papers, nine or ten in number, which the secret recess had contained. There were one or two letters written in a bold, manly hand, and in a tone to match, from the young husband evidently, though only the initials were signed. It was plain that a naturally honourable, straight-for-

ward man had been hurried, by an overpowering passion, into an act for which he heartily despised himself. There were earnest entreaties that he might be allowed to reveal the marriage, exhortations to courage and plain-dealing; keen self-reproach at the part which he had played, and an almost contemptuous dashing aside of the feeble arguments in favour of secrecy with which his bride evidently answered him. Then there were brief directions as to her sojourn by the seaside, and the arrangements for the birth of the expected babe, and there was one letter, the last, written after the child's birth, and just as he was about to start on his Swiss journey, which thus concluded: "When you tell me that to own our marriage would kill your father, I can say no more; but that danger once removed, not an hour shall pass before I claim my wife and child in the face of day." No wonder this letter was blistered with tears. We found other letters too, addressed, not to Miss Hilda, but to Nurse Oliphant; these were in stiff writing and bookish English, evidently written by some one to whom a letter was a great and unusual effort. They announced the arrival of "the child you are interested in," and alluded to certain arrangements for its comfort as mentioned previously. There was one more paper of melancholy interest, the slip from the Times containing the account of the accident by which Henry Hamilton lost his life; and there was a bundle of receipts, all addressed to Nurse Oliphant, for the sum of two hundred pounds, evidently paid yearly, for the maintenance of the luckless boy. These went on to the time when nurse's and Miss Hilda's death occurred within a few days of each other, now about ten years since. Lelgarde eagerly pointed out the signature, "Gideon Hatterick," and the date, "The Coombe Farm, near Hollyfield."

"That is what I wanted. Where is it? Somewhere in Devonshire or Cornwall, I think. I will look it out in Bradshaw, and we will start at once."

"Gently, my dear," I said, for she looked far too much excited to act calmly and sanely just then, "you must take advice before you do anything."

There was a tap at the door, and the astonished face of the young kitchen-maid who entered reminded us that in our absorption we had allowed church-time to pass, and that all the servants were gone.

"Mr. Seymour Kennedy, ma'am," she said; "but I wasn't sure you was in."

"Oh! show him in," cried Lelgarde, in an eager tone, and she rushed out to meet him at the door, her hands still full of papers, with what he evidently took for delighted welcome.

"The very person I wanted!" she cried, eagerly; "come in; I want advice. You will give it me."

I tried to signal caution to her, but it was thrown away; she held out her hand, and he took license to hold it in his, as indeed she almost led him into the drawing-room. I never saw his disagreeable face show so much genuine satisfaction as it did at that moment. I could have shaken Lelgarde for the impression which I saw she was creating.

"I am so glad I came," he said in the soft voice that irritated me; "I was hoping to waylay you as usual in the lane; and when you did not come, I took alarm, and could not help coming to ask if anything was amiss."

"Providence sent you!" said Lelgarde, rather melodramatically.

"Well, I at least shall give Providence a vote of thanks," he answered in a tone which chilled her high-wrought enthusiasm, and she subsided with a blush; seeing which, he spoke still more gently. "Now will you tell me in what I can serve you? I think I need not talk about the pleasure it will give me," and he glanced at me as much as to say "go," to which I replied with a look expressing, "not if I know it."

"Read those," said Lelgarde, and placed the papers in his hands. I watched his countenance narrowly as he read, but it is unnecessary to say that my scrutiny was entirely thrown away. Coolly he read them one by one, and laid them down in regular order; coolly he folded them up again, and then said:

"Well, this is annoying—very."

In spite of my own previous reflections that it was annoying—very—I felt irate with him.

"What ought she to do, do you think?" I asked tartly enough.

"Well; I should hope there may not be much trouble about the matter. There is no proof that the youth is alive; still less that he ever knew his own identity. It is for him to advance the claim; and after all he may not be able to establish it."

Lelgarde had quite regained her self-possession; she spoke with quiet dignity.

"I will take care that there is no difficulty about that; only how to set about finding him?"

"You promised to be guided by my advice, you know; and my advice is—do nothing at present. Wait—take time—look about you; there is at all events no immediate call for action."

Up went my Lelgarde's head.

"You hardly grasp the question, I think," she said.

Mr. Kennedy smiled at the idea, and answered as if she had been a child.

"You must help me then. What is it I do not grasp?"

"You do not realise that every moment I spend here, as mistress of this place, I am adding to the cruel wrong that has gone on so much too long already. No immediate call for action? When for months I have been enjoying what is not my own. Oh! if you knew!"

She stopped—flushed, agitated—not to him could she hint at all that she had suffered.

"We will talk of this when you are calmer," he said in the same soothing voice; "I shall probably be here again in a few weeks—and I—I need hardly say how glad I shall be to serve you. Till we do meet again, let me entreat of you to take no compromising steps."

Lelgarde did not answer; and shortly afterwards Mr. Kennedy wished us good-bye, leaving on my mind a curious impression that, without a cold look, or an uncourteous word, he had been offensive. Not a word, not a look of his could have been found fault with; and yet I felt quite sure of two things—that he thought Lelgarde's warm welcome was due to her prospect of being penniless, and that he was not the man to interest himself in a penniless woman.

"I will have no more of lawyers," Lelgarde cried, impatiently, when he was gone.

"Mr. Graves? Yes, Mr. Graves may be consulted by-and-bye, perhaps, but surely, now, you and I can act for ourselves, Joan. We will go to Hollyfield to-morrow."

And she lost no time in setting about our preparations; examining train papers, and giving orders to the astonished Mrs. Bracebridge. No one who saw her that day, all eager interest, and noted her clear-headed and prompt arrangements, could have identified her with the drooping, pining girl, who had lately gone moping about the house. Not once did her spirits flag. We went to the afternoon service, and there, when my stubborn old spirit was inwardly growling at Providence, I saw her sweet face uplifted in real thankfulness.

Only when we left the church a little tinge of melancholy seemed to steal over her. The days were lengthening fast, and something of daylight lingered still. She passed her arm through mine, silently led me up a path through the plantations, which brought us to the top of a knoll behind the house. Athelstanes lay below us, a grey mass of building. The red light in the sitting-rooms was shining out comfortably in the growing darkness; the cows were walking in slow procession from the milking-shed to the paddock; the garden showed traces of Lelgarde's design for spring beauties. She turned to me with a rather wistful smile.

"Come and gone! Mine has been a strange, short reign, has it not?"

I could not answer. I felt the necessity of being angry with somebody, and thought vindictively of the poor feeble creature, whose selfish weakness had left this legacy of doubt and disappointment behind her, the unfaithful sister, the undutiful daughter, the weak wife who dared not own her husband, the cowardly mother who forsook her sucking child.

"God forgive her!" I said, in as Christian a manner as people generally offer that prayer.

But Lelgarde answered earnestly, "Yes, God forgive her!" And silence fell between us.

Her next words startled me a little.

"Joan, do you remember how they brought us here the first day to have a view of the old house? Ah, me! Harry Goldie may become a great artist, but it is not here that he will visit me. Come, let us go home," she added immediately, and all the evening she was very silent—the reaction, doubtless, from the morning's excitement.

She sat on the hearth-rug, as she often used to do, gazing into the depths of the fire, till I asked if she was reading her fortune there.

"No," she answered, smiling, "I was thinking what silly things day-dreams are."

"A truism, my dear."

"Especially when they concern other people. Most likely what one would plan for them would be very little to their taste."

"Probably."

After a long pause, as if beginning quite another subject, she said abruptly:

"I fancy men have a singular dislike to any obligation."

"They like money, though—no matter how they get it," I said.

"Do they? They do not care for their

wives to bring the money, I fancy—not nice men."

"Are you thinking of Mr. Seymour Kennedy?" I could not help asking.

She raised her eyes to mine in amazement.

"Of Mr. Seymour Kennedy? Certainly not. I was not thinking of any one in particular."

And therewith we both became silent, and continued so till the butler came in with our bedroom candles.

The next morning we started early, slept on the road, and before noon on the following day found ourselves at the little hill-town of Catcombe, the nearest station to the village of Hollyfield.

CHAPTER X.

THE fly at Catcombe was not to be had, but after considerable demur a shandredan of some sort was obtained, driven by a flushed rustic in fustian and velvet. The population gathered in the street to see us start, and we felt ourselves public characters for once in our lives. But Lelgarde at least forgot herself, almost forgot the errand on which she came, in the loveliness that surrounded us when once we left the little town.

From the moment we started we were gradually mounting, and before long a thickly wooded bank rose on our right; on our left was a descent as thickly wooded, ending in a little noisy brook that sparkled out into the light, now and then, a dash of white in the tender April green. A long ascent brought us out on a heathery common, whence we could see all around, over hill and dale, to the sea; and then we began to descend.

"I can see no sign of a house, and yet I suppose Hollyfield is not far off," said Lelgarde; and, even as she spoke, there opened out in the glade below a little cluster of houses round a church and parsonage. No safer nook could certainly have been chosen wherein to bury a secret. Our driver touched his hat, and looked for orders.

"To the parsonage," said Lelgarde, decidedly.

She was very pale, her lips compressed, evidently a little nervous, but self-possessed nevertheless. For myself, I own I felt as if we were pulling the string of a shower-bath. The parsonage, a little ivy-covered thatched cottage, stood close to the churchyard wall; and at the garden gate we got out, and walked up to the door. A round-eyed, rosy-cheeked maid-servant gazed at us

in surprise, and seemed doubtful what to say, when Lelgarde asked if we could speak to the clergyman.

"Or to Mrs.—, to his wife?" she was obliged to end, not knowing what name to mention.

"Ha 'ant got n'ar a one," was the answer; and then, stepping back and knocking at a door, the damsel proclaimed aloud: "Zur, zur, if you please, zur, here be two ladies a come."

I think Lelgarde began to realise that her quest had its awkwardnesses; but she stood her ground with upraised head and quiet, fearless look, a match, as she always was, for all merely human encounters. But we were both relieved, I think, when the clergyman, emerging from his study, proved to be a venerable, silver-haired gentleman of benevolent aspect.

"In what can I serve you? Will you walk in?" he said, politely; and we entered his study, a room in truly bachelor-like disorder, littered with books and papers. Very shy and uncomfortable he looked, and I could not help feeling that we were probably taken for well-got-up beggars of intrusive manners.

Lelgarde began, her voice gathering firmness as she went on.

"I am come to ask if you can give me any information about a child, at least a youth—I suppose—a young man"—(the rector looked alarmed)—"who was brought up, I believe, by some people of the name of Hatterick, at a place called the Coombe Farm, in your parish?"

"Poor Henry Hamilton?" said the clergyman, looking surprised, and much interested.

Lelgarde met the look with one more eager.

"Yes. Oh, that is the person I mean. Where is he?" And she looked ready to start up and fly to him.

The old parson shook his head.

"If you could tell me that, my dear young lady, you would make me a very happy old man," he said, feelingly.

"Is he dead?" I found myself asking; and I suppose the tone was peculiar; for both my listeners looked at me in surprise.

"No," the old man said—(his name was Benson, as we found out afterwards)—"no, I trust not; but where he is, or how he is faring, God knows—the God of the orphan," he murmured, almost to himself.

"Will you please tell me about him. It is not for nothing that I ask," Lelgarde said.

He smiled at the childish emphasis on

the imploring "please," and looked into her young face with sudden kindness.

"You know him, then?" he said.

"No," she answered, blushing a little, "but I believe him to be a relation of my own; I think I know who he is. Unless I can find him I shall be very, very unhappy."

"You know who he is!" cried the old man, eagerly; then, checking himself, "but I see you want to hear all I can tell you before you tell your story. It is not much. I came to the parish—let me see—four-and-twenty years ago; and at that time I believe young Hamilton was at the farm, a little infant, under Mrs. Hatterick's care. Mrs. Hatterick was a good woman."

He paused, musing; there was a misty, unpractical look in his mild blue eye, which, connected with the untidy room and the loaded writing-table, made me set him down as a dreamer and a scribbler more than a worker. His next words confirmed my idea.

"I suppose most old people feel that they have not done as much good in the world as they might; but this is my case, especially when I think of that poor lad. There has always been a mystery about him, and perhaps I ought to have made it my business to try to clear it up, and ascertain if there was any wrong-doing in the matter; but I am not clever at finding the right moment for beginning things—and then it is too late."

"You knew him?" I suggested, as he showed signs of going off into a reverie of self-reproach.

"Knew him? Poor lad, he used to come to me every day from the time he was seven years old to be taught his Latin and English, and such smatterings in general as I could give him. Mrs. Hatterick was a just woman, and while she lived the boy had his due."

"Do you know who paid for his maintenance?" asked Lelgarde.

"Somebody paid, and pretty regularly; a respectable-looking old person used to come at long intervals to visit the farm; but I rather think she was merely an agent for other people. I cannot tell. The boy himself led as happy a life as a boy could lead during his growing-up; even after Mrs. Hatterick died, he held his own well enough, though Gideon Hatterick is a rough man."

"Why did he go away?—for I gather that he is gone," said Lelgarde.

"Ah! that is what I blame myself for; my unhappily dilatory, absent habits," said

Mr. Benson, with a sigh. "Poor youth, he trusted me, and would always have been guided by me. He was, it may be, fourteen or fifteen years old when Gideon Hatterick came to ask my advice, saying that the income paid for young Hamilton's maintenance had suddenly ceased. It had been paid either in person by the woman I told you of, or in bank-notes sent by post, generally from London; so that they had no clue."

"Did not she—that person—ever give any account of the child?" asked Lelgarde eagerly.

"She stated, I believe, that both his parents were dead, and that this annuity would be paid as long as no questions were asked. It seemed a common story enough—" He hesitated and coloured like a girl; then went on: "The lad had always been treated more or less as a gentleman, as indeed he deserved to be; he associated chiefly with two young nephews of mine, who were living with me at that time. I exhorted Gideon Hatterick to keep him in the same way for awhile, and let the youth look about him; Gideon was well-to-do, and could afford it; and I think he loved Hamilton; indeed, we all did, for he was a noble-natured fellow, and full of talent too, poor lad. Just at that time one of my own dear boys fell sick, and I had to leave this place to a curate, and take him to winter in Italy—he had nobody but me."

"And what happened?" I ventured to ask, as the pause grew long.

"Ah! here comes the sad part. My poor young nephew grew worse and worse—in the spring I had to leave him there—in foreign soil—my poor lad. The last few weeks I never left him; I was more absorbed in him than any human creature has a right to be in any one exclusive thing. When, after the funeral, I brought myself to open the packet of letters that had been accumulating, I found one from poor young Hamilton, imploring me to give him some advice and help, or at all events a kind word. Gideon Hatterick, I already knew, had married again, a hard grasping woman not well spoken of in the parish. She hated poor Hamilton, and had stirred up her husband to consider him a burden, and to treat him as a drudge. He was sent out to labour in the fields, and, worse than that, he was every hour taunted with his dependent position, with what they believed to be the disgrace of his birth."

"Oh! how hard! how unjust!" said Lelgarde, tearfully.

"He implored me to suggest some line in which he might hope to secure independence, and earn his own bread. I turned to the date of his letter—it was several weeks old—and there was another of more recent date, written hastily, almost angrily, in which he said that as even I would take no notice of him in his distress, he could bear his life no longer, and had resolved to give up a name to which he was constantly told that he had probably no right, and plunge into the world, to sink or swim. My dear young lady, may you never feel as I have felt, that you have let a soul drift away to its ruin, when a kind word might have saved it."

"But surely—surely you have heard of him since then?" Lelgarde said, almost imploringly.

She had turned very pale, and looked disappointed and weary.

"I lost no time," said Mr. Benson. "I spared no pains. I could not be angry at the insolent answers I got from Mrs. Hatterick. I deserved it all, and more, Heaven knows. But I could find out nothing. The boy had gone off, I suppose had changed his name, for I could not trace him. One or two gentlemen had lodged at Hatterick's the summer before for fishing and sketching, and had taken a good deal of notice, I believe, of the lad; but the Hattericks either could not or would not remember their names; and when I got them at the post-office I had no clue to their addresses."

"But you know their names?" said my sister, breathlessly.

"I did know them," he said, "but there were several of them, and it is ten years ago."

Lelgarde looked thoroughly dispirited. The quest seemed abruptly ended, the clue lost utterly. She put her bundle of papers into Mr. Benson's hands with a few words of explanation.

"Read these," she concluded, "and pity me, for I am the mistress of Athelstanes."

On the 27th of April will be commenced

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